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ABSTRACT

A study examined how Accelerated Reader Program (a computerized reading management program used in elementary education) affected attitudes toward reading and use of the media center. Fifth-grade students in three Lee County, Florida schools were surveyed. One school had no Accelerated Reader program in place; one school had a mandatory Accelerated Reader Program; and one school had a voluntary Accelerated Reader Program. All schools had similar pupil composition (socioeconomic, multicultural, achievement levels) and so were comparable. A two-page survey instrument was developed that included queries about the use of the media center, number of books checked out, enjoyment of reading, and favorite indoor activities. A total of 222 surveys were completed and the results tabulated. Results indicated no relationship between the use of Accelerated Reader and frequency of library use or attitudes toward reading and the media center. Results also indicated that the great majority of fifth-grade students in all three schools enjoyed reading. The most common response to the open-ended query "What would you change in the media center?" was "change nothing." (Contains eight references. Appendixes present the survey instrument, seven charts and one table of data, and information from Accelerated Reader Program.)
(Author/RS)

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ED 399 508

Accelerated Reader Impact on Feelings about Reading and Library Use

A survey of fifth grade students in Lee County, Florida, to determine how a computerized reading management program affects attitudes toward reading and the media center and frequency of library use

by

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Survey Research Project
for
University of South Florida
Library and Information Science
Research Methods Course with Dr. Perrault

May 1996

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CS012585

Dedicated to the fifth grade students,
their teachers, and their media specialists.

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Abstract

Accelerated Reader is a computerized reading management program used in elementary education. A highly structured reading incentive program which supports the basic goal of a literature-based reading curriculum, it is purchased and used by school districts around the nation. A review of the literature indicates that in general microcomputers can help the teacher of reading in a number of ways; that if reading selections are of interest to students, positive feelings toward reading are more likely to occur; and that use of Accelerated Reader improves reading scores on standardized reading tests.

How Accelerated Reader effects attitudes toward reading and use of the media center was the subject of our investigation. We surveyed fifth grade students in three Lee County, Florida schools: one school (Allen Park) had no Accelerated Reader Program in place; one school (Edison Park) had a mandatory Accelerated Reader Program; one school (Franklin Park) had a voluntary Accelerated Reader Program. All schools had similar pupil composition (socioeconomic, multi-cultural, achievement levels) and so were comparable.

A two-page survey instrument was developed (appendix A). Survey questions included queries about use of the media center, number of books checked out, enjoyment of reading, and favorite indoor activities. A total of 222 surveys were completed and the results tabulated. Sufficient data was available to compare attitudes toward reading, frequency of library use, and attitudes toward and use of the media center among the three groups.

The study did not find a relationship between the use of Accelerated Reader and frequency of library use or attitudes toward reading and the media center. The survey results indicated, however, that the great majority of fifth grade students in all three schools enjoyed reading. The open-ended query "What would you change in the media center?" brought forth interesting insights — in fact "change nothing" was the most common response. Information was discovered which should prove useful to librarians and to teachers.

Introduction

Innovative solutions are being implemented which are designed to improve the quality of reading instruction for the nation's children. There are those who argue that to be deemed successful a reading program must develop an enduring love of independent reading among its students. Today educators and parents alike are aware that critics decry the fact that not only are fewer students leaving our educational system with attitudes and habits which will make them life-long readers, many are actually leaving school with insufficient skills to enable them to process written information at a basic level. A United States Department of Education publication, *Adult Literacy in America* (Kirsch, 1993) stated that between 21% and 23% of the population functioned at the lowest level of literacy.

Educators seek to improve their offering in many ways. One relatively recent development in elementary education is the use of computerized reading management programs. Accelerated Reader is such a program; using computers and incentives, it targets improvement in basic reading skills as well as supports a literature-based curriculum. The Accelerated Reader program, offered by a commercial vendor of educational software/multimedia programs, has been shown by researchers to improve students' scores on standardized reading measurement tests.

The Accelerated Reader program consists of a software package containing disks that correspond to books (which may be purchased separately). The software has self-administered reading tests that the students use in the classroom to earn points. The role of the media center (a school library is commonly called a media center; the terms are, for our purposes, interchangeable) is to provide as many as possible of the 7,300 available Accelerated Reader titles in the school collection, clearly labeled and with the reading level and number of "points" inside the front cover of each book. Schools usually offer prizes (incentives) for certain point levels achieved. While in some schools, the program is voluntary and supplements reading instruction, in others it is mandatory. Thus success in the program may

determine all or part of a student's reading grade.

The titles are works that many school libraries will already own: well-known books by beloved children's book authors, classics, as well as modern favorites. The list also includes quality non-fiction works, also commonly available in a school library. The books may be purchased in sets to match each disk, or individually if some titles are already in the collection, from most large book vendors.

The Query: do students in the Accelerated Reader program have improved attitudes toward reading and toward the library?

Our stated hypothesis: to compare the use of the Accelerated Reader incentive program in elementary schools to non-Accelerated Reader elementary schools, with the expectation that use of the Accelerated Reader program would result in increased frequency of library use and result in improved attitudes toward reading and the media center.

Fifth graders in three Lee County Elementary Schools were the target population of our survey. One school does not have the Accelerated Reader program, one uses it as a voluntary component of the reading program, and in one it is mandatory, it forms the basis of the reading program.

Review of the Literature

Many quantitative studies, published between 1988 and 1993, have compared a literature-based reading approach to a basal approach. Findings suggest that the literature-based approach has a small positive effect on reading comprehension and the use of quality literature is important. The majority of studies concluded that the literature-based method produced higher reading achievement and fostered more positive attitudes than the basal method. Children of all ability levels, given an opportunity to experience reading as a visual and thought process, take a more active role in their own learning. Students not only learn to

read, they also develop a love for reading and become life-long readers through the process of using a literature-based method (Kramer, 1989).

Instruction which involves computers (Computer-assisted instruction — CAI) benefits from the enthusiasm youngsters have about working with computers and academic motivation usually improves (Spencer and Baskin, 1983; Merton, 1983; Fisher, 1983). While questions remain unanswered about the most effective way to utilize the power of the computer within the realm of education, it is certain that the use of computers can help the teacher of reading in a number of ways.

Research data provided by the Accelerated Reader company itself indicates that the program is beneficial in increasing reading achievement as measured by standardized tests. One example cited was the 1994 Winter issue of *ERS Spectrum* in which a study "Reading Achievement: Effects of Computerized Reading Management and Enrichment" reviewed third-, sixth-, and eighth-grade California Achievement Test reading scale scores for two randomly selected, demographically matched groups of students. One group used Accelerated Reader from third through eighth grade, one did not. The study found that students who used the program improved their reading scores 50% more from third through sixth grade than the non-using group; between grades six and eight the difference in favor of Accelerated Reader students was even more impressive. Practice and comprehension components are built into the program; it is literature based — we speculated that it would have a significant impact upon student attitudes toward the library and toward reading.

Methodology — Gathering the Data

Three local Lee County schools of similar size and demographics were chosen; their pupils had approximately the same socioeconomic, multi-cultural, ability and achievement levels. The three schools are located near one another and face many of the same challenges. While two are magnet schools, the third is a gifted center site, which draws in the

same type of students as the magnet schools. Two of the schools have had the Accelerated Reader program in place for some time, while the third has not (though it is planning to implement the program in the near future).

Edison Park Elementary Art Magnet School (Edison Park) has the Accelerated Reader program. Students are required to participate in the program and in large part this participation determines their reading grade. Franklin Park Elementary Science Magnet School (Franklin Park) offers the Accelerated Reader program as a voluntary component of the reading program. Allen Park Elementary (Allen Park) has no Accelerated Reader program. It was decided to select the fifth grade as the population to be assessed.

The media specialists and fifth grade teachers in each school cooperated in administering the project survey to their students (each school had three fifth-grade classrooms). A copy of the survey instrument is included as Appendix A. The 2-page survey was designed for use by youngsters at the fifth-grade level. It gave them an opportunity to answer questions about their use of the library, number of books checked out, if they enjoy reading, their favorite indoor activities, as well as a chance to offer suggestions for improvements in the school media center. Students took the survey in their classrooms; anonymity was assured. It took most students between five and ten minutes to complete the questionnaire. Surveys were administered between March 11 and March 22, 1996.

222 surveys were completed; Edison Park — 81; Franklin Park — 72; Allen Park — 69. Youngsters surveyed included 114 girls and 108 boys. The majority of survey questions were answered without a problem. In a few isolated instances on specific questions, a student either did not write a response or obviously did not understand the question and wrote in multiple responses when only one was appropriate. In those cases, the response for that particular question was not counted as a valid response. Data was analyzed descriptively; Microsoft's Excel software program was used to display the graphic results.

Analysis of Data

It would be fair to say that the data when analyzed produced surprising results. Our original premise, that there would be marked differences in reading habits and attitudes between students enrolled and not enrolled in Accelerated Reader programs was not validated in our survey results.

For the convenience of the reader we grouped positive indicators together to produce the first chart (*chart 1* ; p. 14). The responses to "Do you enjoy reading?" show no substantial statistical difference between student responses at the different schools. Happily a large percentage of all fifth graders in **all** schools enjoy reading: Edison Park 86%, Franklin Park, 90%, and Allen Park (with no Accelerated Reader program) 91%.

Not many students, however, chose reading as one of their **two most favorite indoor activities**. Percentages were closely grouped, but again, Allen Park had the highest percentage choosing reading as a favorite activity (Edison Park 9%, Franklin Park 13%, and Allen Park 15%). Writing, *output*, the reverse of reading, *input*, was chosen by even fewer youngsters as a favorite activity: Edison Park 5%, Franklin Park 6%, and Allen Park 4%.

One might assume that checking out a larger number of books would indicate more reading and more positive feelings toward books. In the highest category of books checked out (four or more), we did find Edison Park (where Accelerated Reader is mandatory) with 10%, twice the number as Allen Park (5%); Franklin Park, however, had just 6%. The percentage of those checking out two to three books were closely grouped: Edison Park 38%, Franklin Park 31%, and Allen Park 33%. Other positive responses about library use, as shown on the chart, also did not clearly demonstrate any correlation to Accelerated Reader.

Looking at our second chart (*chart 2* ; p. 15) where we have grouped negative attitudes and habits, again, no clear cut pattern emerges. At Edison Park 14% of fifth graders stated that they did not enjoy reading; it was 10% at Franklin Park, and 9% at Allen Park. We see that 46% of the students at Franklin Park had checked out no books the

previous week; we can only wonder if there was something unusual scheduled which in some way interfered with the usual library check-out process; at Edison 11% checked out no books; at Allen Park 12% checked out no books. Negative responses about library use, as shown on the chart, indicate no trends.

We thought it might be interesting to compare differences in the sexes in response to the question: Do you enjoy reading? Percentage of girls responding yes — 98%; percentage of boys responding yes — 80% (*chart 3* ; p. 16). We also graphed favorite indoor activities by number of students, boys and girls, making choices (*chart 4* ; p. 17). Each student was asked to choose two favorite activities; 91 boys and 97 girls gave valid responses to this question. 7% of the total of girls' choices were for writing (poem, story, or diary journal), while writing accounted for only 2% of the boys' choices. 15% of total choices for girls was reading a book or magazine as a favorite activity; while it was only 9% of the total of boys' choices. Computer games was the choice of 12% of the girls's total, while it was the choice of 20% of the boys' total. Statistically other category choices were more nearly equal between the sexes.

A pictograph displays responses to the question: Do you have a computer at your house which you can use? (*chart 5* ; p. 18). Percentages responding yes: Allen Park 46.3%; Edison Park 58.8%; Franklin Park 66.2%; fifth-grade boys at all schools 63.6%; fifth-grade girls at all schools 50%.

Two graphs display the results of asking fifth graders what kind of books they enjoy. They could check ALL categories that applied; the charts graph percentages from total numbers chosen. Tallied results show 598 "votes" were cast for fiction (*chart 6* ; p. 19) and 533 "votes" for non-fiction selections (*charts 7* ; p. 20). We have included a table summarizing results of the open-ended question — What would you change in the media center? (*table 1* ; p. 21). The write-in question showed that the majority of students were happy with the media centers as they are.

Interpretation

This study did not find a relationship between use of Accelerated Reader and frequency of library use or attitudes toward reading and the media center. The survey results did not support a more positive attitude in students involved in a voluntary Accelerated Reader program over those not involved in the Accelerated Reader program. Neither did we see significant negative attitudes in those students who were required to participate in Accelerated Reader. Some possible explanations for the lack of more conclusive results follow.

Our sample was a small one. The survey format and the language comprehension level of the youngsters limited somewhat the possibility of in-depth analysis of feelings. Going over the returned surveys, we felt the placement of question six, where youngsters were ask to check all that applied, and question seven, where they were instructed to check only two responses, might have been confusing for some children. We recommend separating these questions in future surveys of this type. We learned the importance of giving students complete and explicit directions when administering the survey.

We had no indication of how long any individual student had participated in the Accelerated Reader program. It might be that attitudes take longer to develop; perhaps those youngsters who spend a number of years in school using a CAI program with incentives will, eventually, develop more positive attitudes towards reading, but this is not certain. Many factors are involved in influencing feelings. We might speculate that a specific approach and program, such as Accelerated Reader, is not as significant as other factors: personality of and structures set up by classroom teacher and librarian; parental attitudes and examples; societal influences.

Summary and Conclusions

Our survey results were, in many ways, reassuring. A great majority of fifth grade students in all three schools, with or without the Accelerated Reading program, stated that they enjoyed reading. The most significant response to the query about what would you change in the media center was students writing in: **Change nothing**. Many youngsters obviously felt that there was no way their school library could be improved. After that, their most numerous request was simply for more books, more titles on the shelf to choose from. Certainly this is good news to all of us who want to see a love of reading engendered in the young.

It was rather disappointing, though, to see the meager number of youngsters who, when faced with a list of indoor activities, choose either reading or writing as one of their two favorite activities. While we in no way doubt the accuracy of the results, it is not a good indicator of the health of the overall goals of education in Lee County. The responses to how often students used the media center for a variety of activities could be interpreted in a variety of ways. The results may indicate more about the way the media specialist structures her program, rather than the way students feel about the activities or books in general. It was heartening to discover so many children did have home access to a computer. If anything the similarity in numbers of students who had access to a computer in all schools, validated our conclusion that the school populations were similar in make-up.

Our research did put us in touch with the authentic voices of the students when they wrote in response to **What would you change in the media center?**

Franklin Park
"NOTHING"
I would make the media center have more books about inventors, and I would put more games about books on the computer."
In all schools, the author Stine was frequently mentioned, as in this plea:
"More computer and more games for the kids to work on. And more good Goose Bumps books. About a thousand of those."
"I would have half of the Media Center full of Goosebumps."
"Add more craft, cooking, and gardening books."
"Nothing should be changed. I like it the way it is."

"More printers to print things out."
"That we should have more books in the media center and old books like the Hobbit and more computer games."
"More Power Macs and Nintendo Power Magazines should be in the library."
Several requested more computers, but one youngster was quite specific: "Computers two IBM Compatibles, 586 16 RAM 6 speed CD ROM with Doomland, Doom 2, and Epson color jet printer with Windows 95."

Allen Park

"I would get better books and have more scary mystery books."
"Really nothing."
"More Sunshine books, less talking, more time for book check out"
"I would get more books on Black Americans. I would also get computer games to check out and use in the computers in the classrooms."
"I would change the books, the computers, and everything because it's not exciting."
"I would change nothing because it is great."
"The library is just fine."
"I would like more science books. Informative (computers)."
"I would like to have more time during media!"
"Not a thing."

Edison Park

"Nothing really because you have everything you really need (books, computers and people)."
"Nothing."
"Able to check out more books. More choice of books. Find out if AR by search[ing] computer and what the reading level is."
"I wish you could check out 4 books tops instead of only 2."
"I would like to be able to know by looking on the search computers whether a book is A.R. or not."
"Needs more good books."
"We need to be there more."
"More games for older kids. All A.R. books in one section. More computers to play on."
"I wouldn't change the media center. I like it the way it is. It is a fun and educational place at school."

Our research did not show that the Accelerated Reader program made any significant differences in fifth graders' attitudes toward the library, toward reading, or use of the library. Through our research, however, we were able to find out information which should prove useful to both media specialists and to teachers. Further studies would benefit from greater control of tracking students to know length of time in Accelerated Reader, as well as a larger survey population.

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APPENDIX A

SCHOOL MEDIA SURVEY

1. Did you go to the school media center **last week?** (Check the box ✔)

   Yes ☐ No ☐

2. Do you enjoy reading? (Check the box)

   Yes ☐ No ☐

3. Do you have a computer at your house which you can use? (Check the box)

   Yes ☐ No ☐

4. Check the box that tells how many books you checked out **this past week.**

   0 ☐ 2 - 3 ☐

   1 ☐ 4 or more ☐

5. Put checks in the boxes below to show how you have used the media center **during the past month.**

	Very often	Some	Very little or Not at all
Writing Reports			
Computers			
Reading for fun			
Leisure (Games & Puzzles)			
Story Time			
Book Check-Out			

(Please continue on page 2)

6. What kinds of books do you enjoy? Check **ALL** that apply to you.

FICTION

_____Stories about animals
_____Mysteries and ghost stories
_____Sports stories
_____True life stories
_____Humorous (funny books)

NON-FICTION

_____Biographies (stories about real people)
_____History
_____Poetry
_____Science — How things work
_____Science — animals and plants
_____Sports

7. Put a check in the box beside the **TWO** indoor activities listed below that are your most favorite.

☐ Watch television or a video

☐ Work a puzzle

☐ Draw or paint

☐ Play a computer game

☐ Read a book or magazine

☐ Write a story, poem, or diary journal

☐ Listen to music

8. Check one.

I am a girl. ☐

I am a boy. ☐

9. What would you change in the media center?

_____

_____

_____

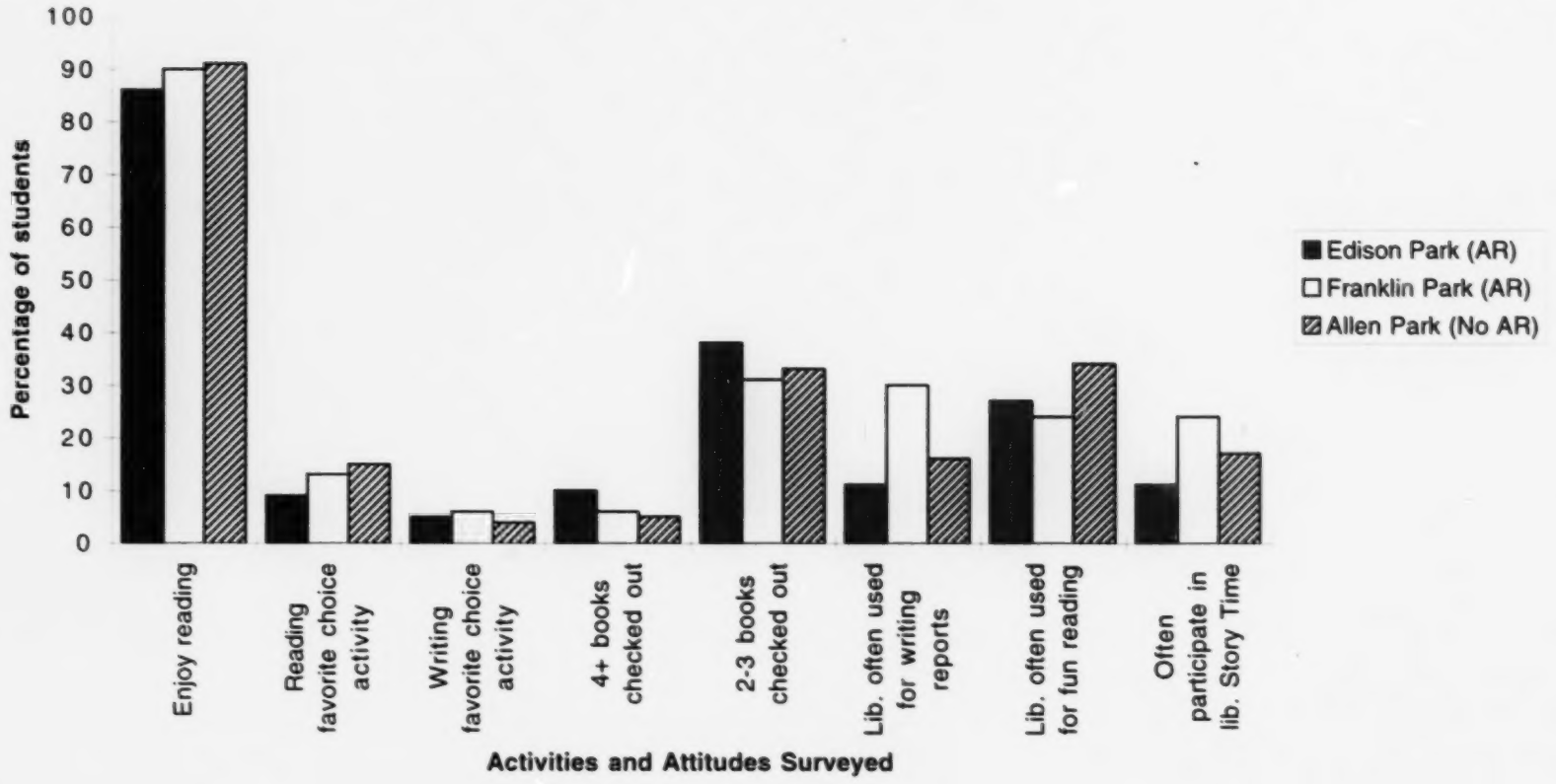
_____

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP

APPENDIX B

Chart 1

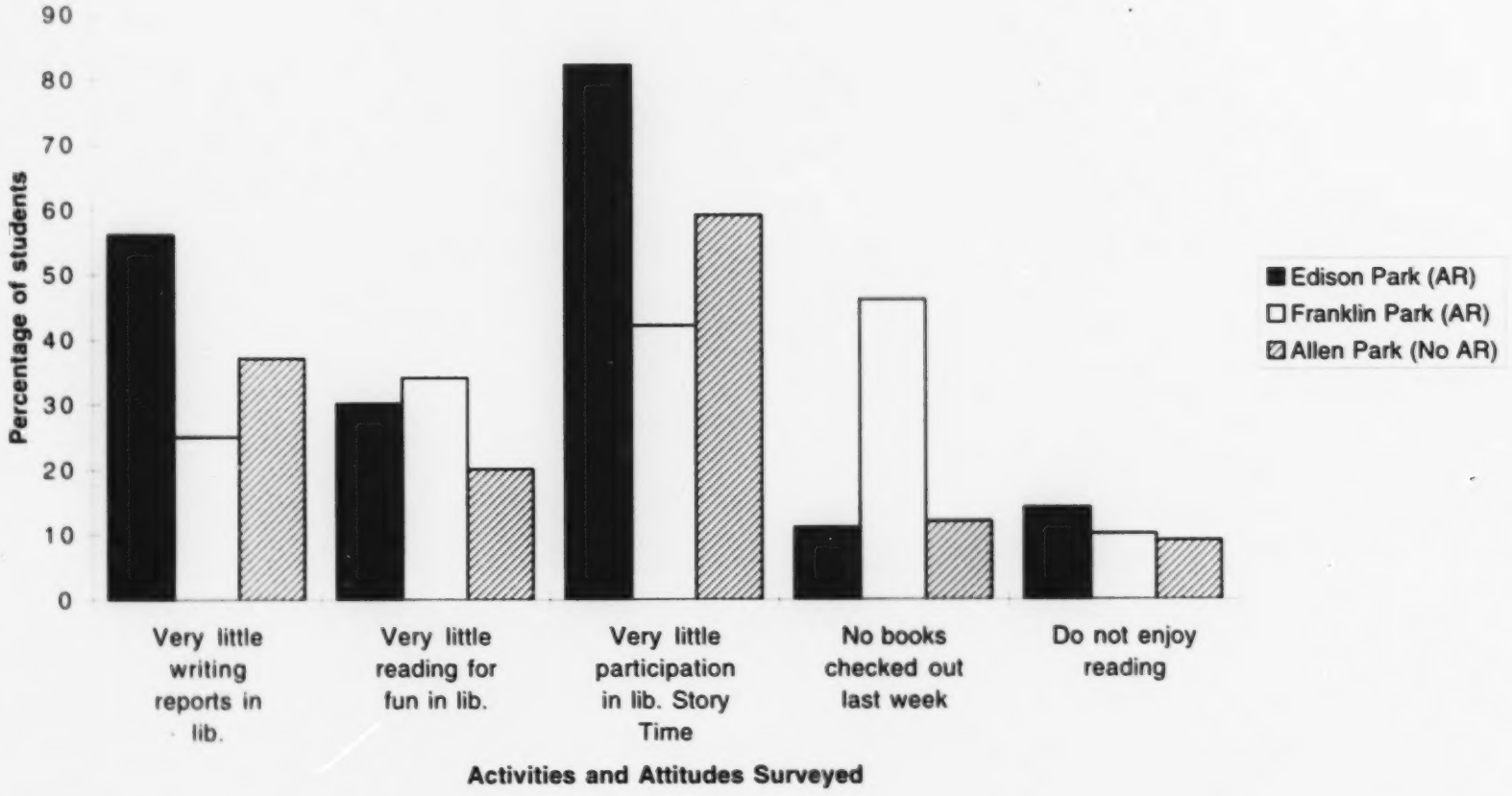
How does the Accelerated Reading Program affect library use and attitudes toward reading?



Edison Park AR is mandatory ; Franklin Park AR is voluntary ; Allen Park has no structured reading incentive program (AR)

Chart 2

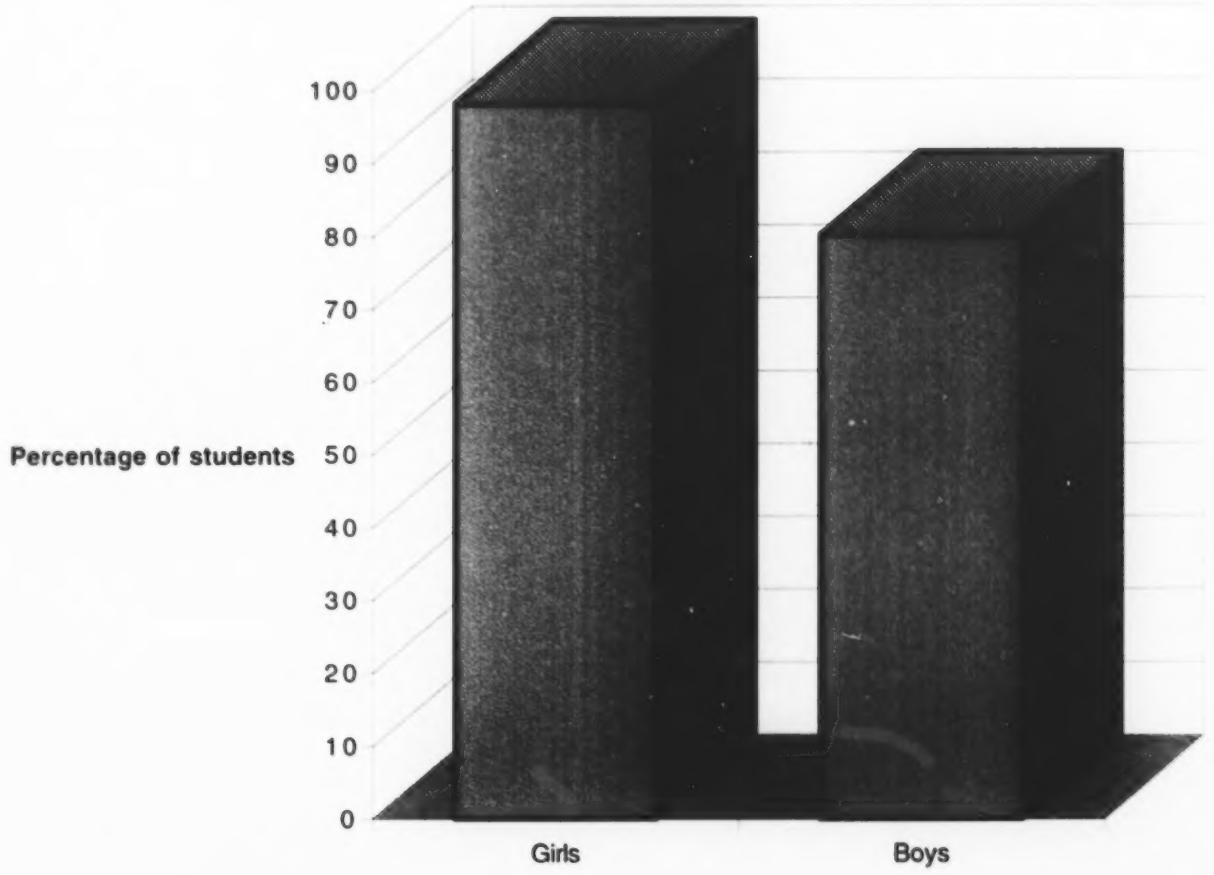
How does the Accelerated Reading Program affect library use and attitudes toward reading?



Edison Park AR is mandatory ; Franklin Park AR is voluntary ; Allen Park has no structured reading incentive program (AR)

Chart 3

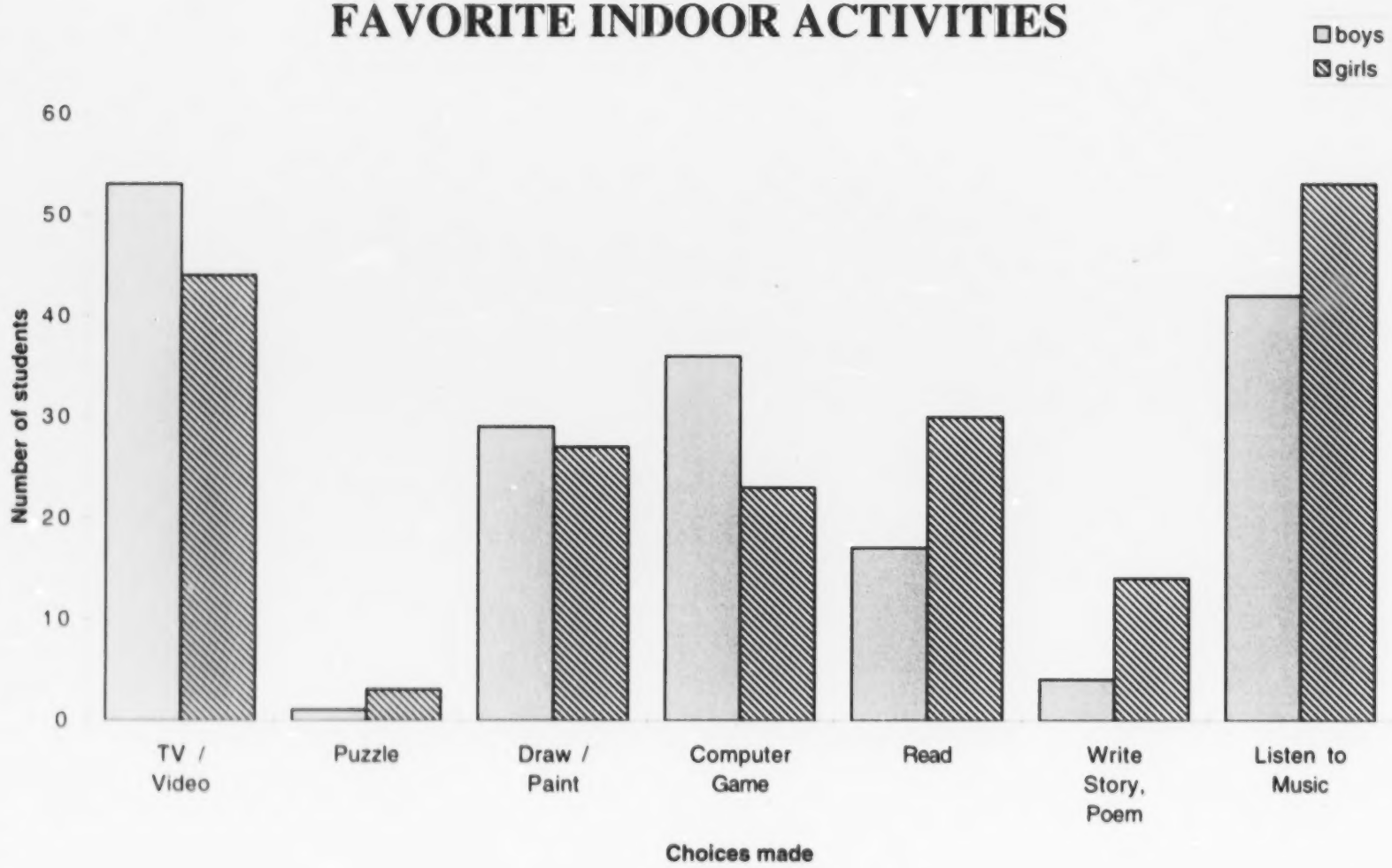
Fifth Graders Who Enjoy Reading



Comparison of 5th grade boys' and girls' response to "Do you enjoy reading?"

Chart 4

FAVORITE INDOOR ACTIVITIES



Students were asked to select two most favorite indoor activities.

Chart 5

FIFTH GRADE STUDENTS WHO HAVE A COMPUTER AT HOME WHICH THEY CAN USE

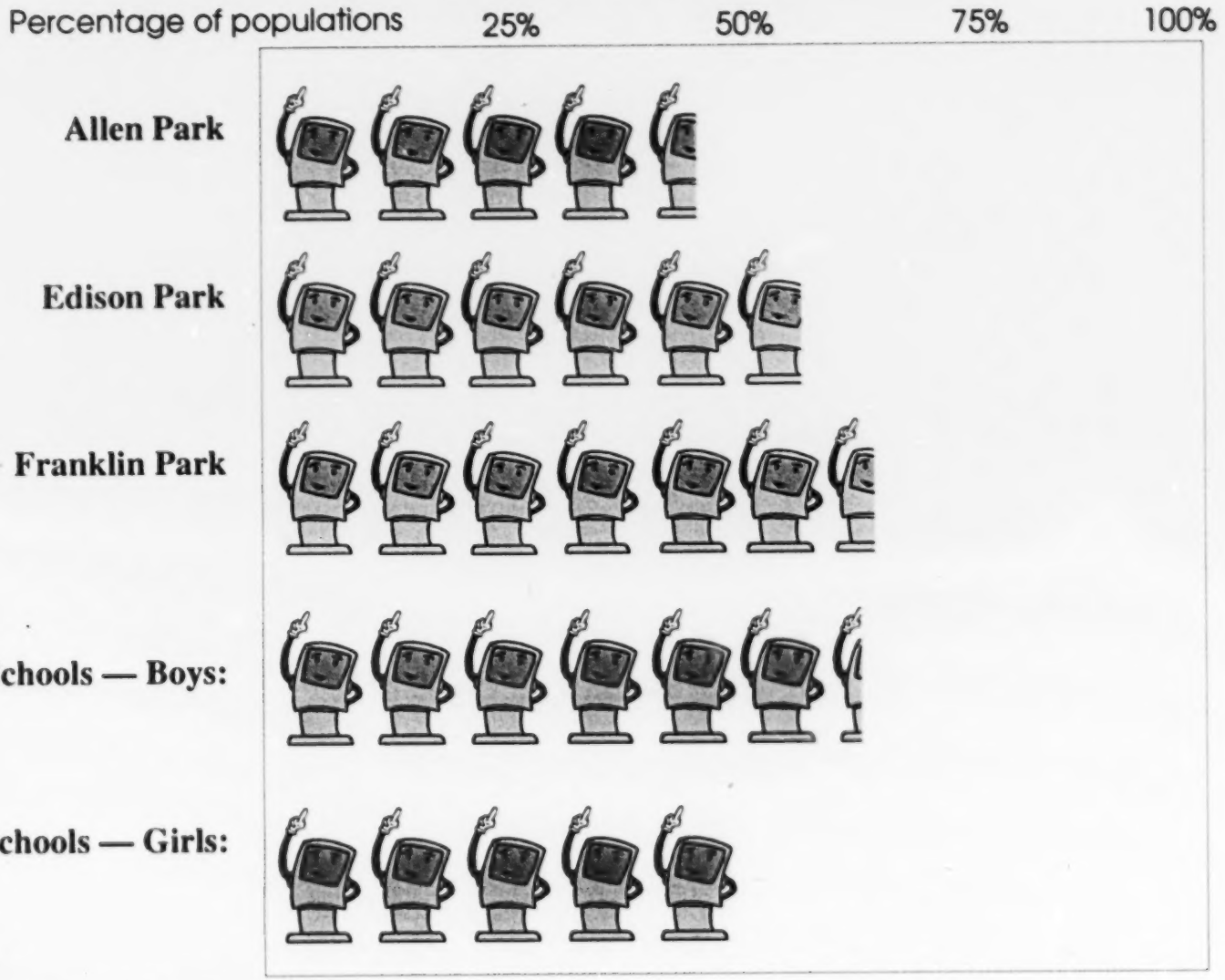


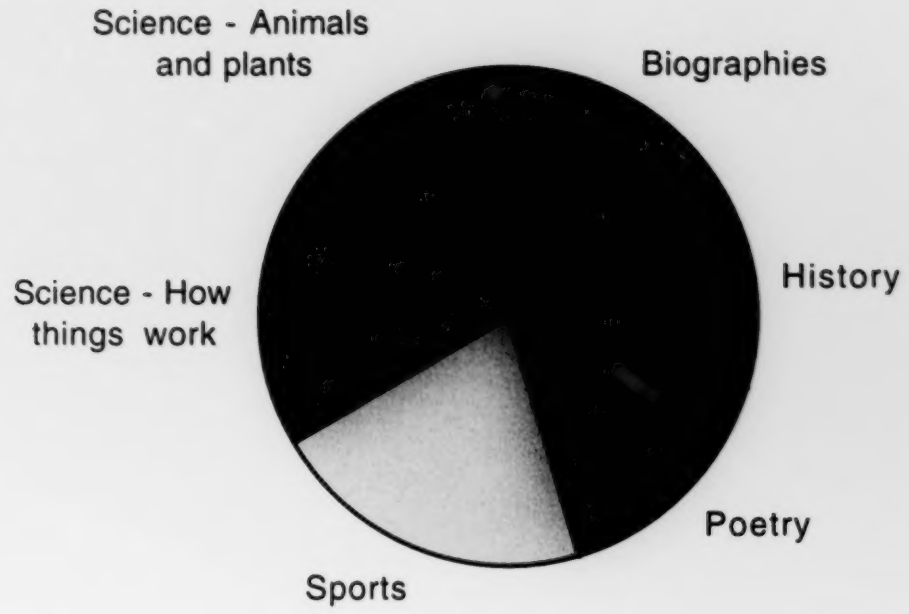
Chart 6

FIFTH GRADERS VOTE FOR THEIR FAVORITE FICTION BOOKS

Response to: What kinds of books do you enjoy? Check ALL tht apply to you.

Chart 7

FIFTH GRADERS VOTE FOR THEIR FAVORITE NON-FICTION BOOKS



- Biographies
- History
- Poetry
- Sports
- Science - How things work
- Science - Animals and plants

Table 1

WHAT WOULD YOU CHANGE IN THE MEDIA CENTER?

Number Responding	*Suggestions written by students*
54	Change Nothing
41	More Books (including specific titles)
28	More Computers
15	More Games (especially computer games)
11	Have More Time in the Media Center
7	Allow More Books to be Checked Out
6	Put all AR Books in one section
5	Have more leisure time activities
4	Easier to know if a book is AR or Not

Data 3 schools; other suggestions: more printers, more magazines (3 each); no overdue charges, add a fish tank (1 each)

APPENDIX C

NO. 64 Jan 1996

"Total AR school" leaves its FL county behind in reading scores

Reading scores at Windy Ridge Elementary School, Orlando, FL., are significantly higher than overall scores in its county, said Kenyan Cannon, Media Specialist. And the gap is growing, she said, largely because of the school's use of the Accelerated Reader.

Cannon cited fourth-grade reading levels. Orange County as a whole recorded a 44 percentile score on the Stanford-8 Achievement Test in both 1994 and 1995, while the Windy Ridge scores were 57 percentile in 1994 and 60 percentile in 1995, "and we are sure they will be even higher at the end of this school year," she said.

Kenyan Cannon with AR honor book

Windy Ridge, a pre-K through 5 school with 675 students, installed the Accelerated Reader three years ago. With the ardent support of Principal Jenell Bovis, Windy Ridge has become "a total AR school," Cannon said. All classes, including the multi-age K-1 classes *(see story on page 9)*, use the computerized reading management program. Many recognition and incentive programs support the basic goal of the literature-based curriculum, which is to develop a lifelong love of independent reading among the students.

Silent reading time is allotted in all classrooms, determined by teacher and grade curriculum time constraints. Accelerated Reader tests are administered on Macintosh computers in classrooms or in the library.

> *"The Accelerated Reader tells me at a glance when they're over their heads. One of the beauties of the program is its great record-keeping capability."*

Cannon's library computers are host to about 100 AR tests a day, in addition to the tests taken in classrooms. "Students are lined up waiting for me to open the library at 7:30 a.m. each day," Cannon said, "and some test after school, at the risk of missing buses and calling home for a ride."

Cannon said the program saves her the time that formerly was spent one-on-one with students to assure herself they could handle the books they were selecting. "The Accelerated Reader tells me at a glance when they're over their heads," she said. "One of the beauties of the program is its great record-keeping capability."

With a Master's degree in reading, 13 years as a classroom teacher, and 12 years as a Media Specialist, Cannon said her experience supports the Accelerated Reader's use of the Fry Readability Index, an important part of Advantage Learning Systems' rating of books. She said, "I've done Fry evaluations myself, and agree with the program's ratings of the books. Sometimes, a student will ask why a thin book has more points and a higher reading level than a thicker one. I explain sentence structure and vocabulary, and they quickly understand."

Cannon said, "Two things produce good readers who have a love of books: Practice and comprehension. The program and our incentive systems motivate them to read more and more. That's the practice part. And they learn quickly that they must read carefully to score well on the tests. That's the comprehension part."

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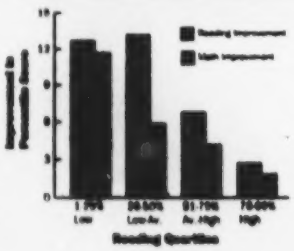
UNPRECEDENTED RESEARCH

Reading Study Shows Reading Practice Improves Test Scores, Academic Performance

In the *1992 National Reading Study*, researchers compared students' Accelerated Reader reading points to the changes in their scores on standardized reading tests from the beginning to the end of the school year.

Reading and Math Ability Improvement Per 100 Points of Literature-Based Reading



The results were remarkable. The number of reading points a student earned strongly correlated with an increased reading ability by year's end. Even more compelling was the finding that ***the lower a student's reading ability at the beginning of the Accelerated Reader program, the more dramatic was the improvement*** over the course of the year. Young students of low reading ability improved ***an average of 2.13 grade levels for every 100 points earned*** in the program.

The *1993 National Study of Literature-Based Reading* was a larger follow-up on the earlier study of 4,498 students. This 10,124-student study not only confirmed the impact of Accelerated Reader participation on reader scores, ***it also showed that an increase in reading points resulted in improved math scores.***

Accelerated Reader Is Top Pick in QED Librarian Survey

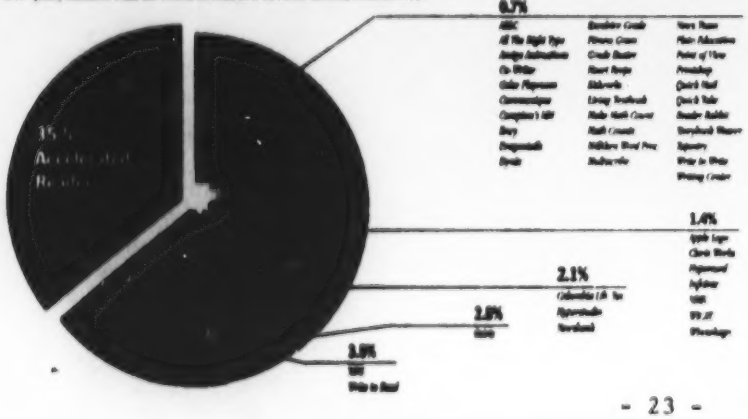
"Please tell us about the special programs in your school that work toward improving the quality of education."

When Quality Education Data, Inc., asked 30,000 school librarians and media specialists that question, more of them named the Accelerated Reader than any other software brand. In fact, the Accelerated Reader was cited more than five times as often as any other specific software.

As one South Carolina librarian put it, "Six-year use of the Accelerated Reader program as one part of the school's Whole-Language approach has resulted in a student body full of readers who enjoy and comprehend what they read."

Figures represent percentages of 141 specific software brand mentions

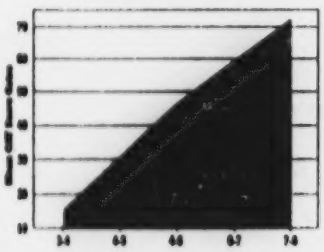
* Source: Quality Education Data, Inc. *Online Services in K-12 Public Schools*, December 1994



Controlled Study Shows Cumulative Impact of Program

A controlled study of five years of student data conducted by North Carolina researchers concluded that the Accelerated Reader "had a significant effect on students' reading achievement." The study, *"Reading Achievement: Effects of Computerized Reading Management and Enrichment,"* published in the Winter 1994 issue of *ERS Spectrum*, reviewed third-, sixth-, and eighth-grade California Achievement Test reading scale scores for two randomly selected, demographically matched groups of students. One group used the Accelerated Reader from third through eighth grade; the other group did not. The study found that students who used the program improved their reading scores 50% more from third through sixth grade than the non-using group. Between grades six and eight, the data were even more impressive. The Accelerated Reader group's annual CAT score improvement was more than double the non-using group.

Longitudinal Comparison
All School vs. Non-User School



Accelerated Reader "Named among Highest Rated" by ASCD

The Accelerated Reader is one of only 80 "Highest-Rated" programs cited in the 1995 edition of *Only the Best*, published by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. The guide identifies the most recent educational software and multimedia programs that have met high standards for excellence.

ASCD editors and researchers sifted through approximately 10,000 evaluations by 35 of the most respected educational software/multimedia evaluation efforts in the United States and Canada. "The sifting process is particularly helpful to educators and parents who cannot afford to make costly mistakes in software/multimedia purchases," the guide states. "The confirmation from several evaluation services, with no service disagreeing, clearly increases the assurance of excellence in the resulting ratings, comparable to an 'A' grade."

The Accelerated Reader joins select company. Since the first edition of *Only the Best* in 1985, less than 8 percent of the approximately 134,000 educational software/multimedia programs now available have met its high standards.

FROM: ACCELERATED READER MAGAZINE : Spring 1995, Advantage Learning Systems, Inc. 3

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